

1743

Help

FOR A WORLD IN CHAOS

A Message to Christians



Help for a World in Chaos

*T*he one fact on which intelligent people everywhere are agreed is that *the world is chaotic and insecure.*

ASIA is in a ferment of revolt against the Western imperialisms, of internal tensions and of civil war.

AFRICA has not yet reached the stage of explosive action, but beneath the surface there is seething unrest, stimulated by the return of black men who served in other lands and thus discovered how precarious is the civilization of their European masters.

EUROPE is bled white of wealth, inherited ethical convictions and its religious faith. Solving the problem of mere subsistence is the all-absorbing interest of the individual and of the nations.

LATIN AMERICA lacks political stability. Its traditional form of Christianity no longer appeals to intellectuals and condones low ethical standards for the uneducated masses.

In NORTH AMERICA racial segregation and injustice is the accepted pattern of human relationship, against which church and state alike are just beginning to struggle. Management and labor are forming country-wide battle lines. Crime vies with juvenile delinquency for public attention.

*A*ll over the world, uncounted millions of people lack food, shelter, clothing and medical care, yet increasing populations press ever harder on available supplies. Multitudes have lost faith in the potentialities of the common man and are turning either to pessimism, cynicism and despair, or to a reliance upon some form of totalitarian control of society for its own good. There is no commonly accepted ethical code for the world. Many people no longer believe that religion is concerned with these conditions or has the power to remedy them.

The interdependence of all mankind is freely recognized but almost all plans for carrying the ideal of universal brotherhood into practice are stymied by the human factor. The best-laid plans of high-minded men and women are wrecked on the rock of human selfishness and sin.

A second fact of equal importance is *the accelerating tempo of change* resulting mainly from scientific discoveries. Within little more than a generation, the age of steam has been outmoded by electricity and the internal combustion engine. No one knows how soon atomic energy will outstrip both.

*M*an can speak and hear around the earth. He can already see unbelievable distances out into space. To the average man it seems only a comparatively short time until he can see what is happening anywhere on the globe.

Through all these media there is taking place a mass transformation of living and thinking. People in many countries see the same motion pictures, hear the same broadcasts, dress alike and read world news as it happens. The names of Roosevelt and Churchill, Lenin and Stalin are household words in almost as many major languages as is the name of Jesus Christ. People of every race and culture may soon be traveling faster than sound. Ideas already travel with the speed of light.

For better or for worse, the world has become one physically and is tending to become one intellectually and socially; but the spiritual unity of all men in Christ which is the goal of Christian faith lags far behind.

*T*he Church has long proclaimed that *if Christianity is honestly believed and fully practised, it will solve all problems of human maladjustment*. It brings all men into right relationship with the one God and Father of all. In Him, they ground their faith in the moral order of the universe. As disciples of Jesus, they learn to live together as God's children, using their intelligence and ability in loving cooperation.

It is the task of the Church not only to make these teachings more effective in the daily life of every Christian and within the Church itself, but also to increase the number of Christians, linked in a steadily growing world-wide Christian fellowship. Through foreign missions, the churches of North America carry on this two-fold task overseas. In the name of Christ they minister to the whole range of human need, from hunger and disease to man's restlessness until he finds God.

The critical needs of mankind, the fact that Christians believe that in Christ they have the Way to meet those needs and the new techniques making possible speedy change demand that the Christians of the world work harder, faster, and more effectively than ever before. They must embody the love of God in lives of Christian action as well as proclaim Him with all the newest techniques for conveying ideas.

*T*o share in this worldwide mission of the Church, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America calls the Christians of Canada and the United States.

*"God...
yearns"*

"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ yearns for the response of His human children with all the suffering love which Christ revealed on the cross. Only as we who have found Him lead His other children to Him can the yearning heart of the Father be satisfied.

"Evangelism is man's part in the unending process by which God works with and through His Son, Jesus Christ, and His disciples to bring men into that right relationship with Himself which is salvation.

"Ministry in the spirit of Jesus to those less fortunate than ourselves is an integral part of the Christian life and of Christian duty and privilege in its own right. Yet since this ministry is in itself an expression of the love of God at work in the world, it also inevitably is a part of the process of evangelism."

From the report of the Commission on Effective Evangelism, 1947

TYPICAL ENTERPRISES OF FOREIGN MISSION BOARDS

cooperating through the

FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

*E*vangalism in the inclusive sense defined above is the primary, integrating motive and objective of the work of the foreign mission boards associated in the Conference. Out of nearly two hundred cooperative projects and common emphases agreed upon as parts of that process, a few typical illustrations are listed here.

- Aiding the churches of Japan in their campaign to win and instruct three million new Christians in the next three years.
 - Developing programs of Christian broadcasting for Latin America, the Middle East and China.
 - Pushing strong campaigns for literacy and use of audio-visual aids around the world.
 - Recruiting greatly increased numbers of technically trained missionaries, including agriculturalists, teachers of industrial vocations, doctors and nurses as well as teachers of academic subjects.
 - Developing Christian higher education in Africa and strengthening it elsewhere.
 - Cooperating with the churches of Europe to restore church life and missionary effectiveness.
 - Expressing Christian friendliness for foreign students in North America especially through cooperation with the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students.
 - Doing our utmost to increase the Christian influence of North American business personnel in the mission areas where they work.
 - Working with related agencies in efforts to apply Christian principles to international relationships.
 - Cooperating with private agencies, governments and the United Nations in welfare programs and work for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
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May 20, 1947.

To all Member Boards and Agencies:

At the Annual Meeting in Buck Hill Falls in
January, the Conference voted:

That the Secretarial Council be asked to prepare a special message dealing with the reaffirmation of the purpose and spirit of the missionary enterprise and the character and urgency of the present situation, and that it be sent with appropriate letters to mission boards, church assemblies and conventions, state and local councils of churches, the National Council of Community Churches, summer conferences, institutes, etc., and to the Interseminary Conference, the International Council of Religious Education meeting, the Christian Youth Conference at Oslo, the Student Volunteer Convention, the World Baptist Convention at Copenhagen, the Lutheran World Convention at Lund, Sweden, the Disciples World Convention at Buffalo, the Methodist Ecumenical Conference, the Association of Council Secretaries, the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Whitby, Canada, the religious press.

The Secretarial Council prepared the message, which was approved with slight alterations by the Committee of Reference and Counsel at its February meetings. Largely due to personal delay on my part, it is only now available. A copy is enclosed with this letter.

Our first edition of 10,000 copies will cover the state and local councils of churches, the National Council of Community Churches, the Interseminary Conference, the International Missionary Council constituency, the Student Volunteer Convention next Christmas, and most of the world gatherings listed. I figure that this edition will make possible up to 50 free copies per member board, which in most cases will cover the central board group however it may be designated, and a comparatively few additional copies. It is my understanding that further circulation at "church assemblies and conventions", including the Disciple World Convention at Buffalo, and denominational "summer conferences, institutes, etc.", all of which will call for many thousand additional copies if the entire attendance is covered, is the responsibility of the member boards. We can supply additional copies of the present edition at \$3.00 per hundred, and print further editions which may be somewhat less expensive, upon order from the boards.

Please let me know how many you want for your board, and whether folded or flat, and we shall do our best to meet your needs promptly.

Sincerely yours,

Wynn C. Fairfield

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